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COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCIES



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COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

PURPOSE

The Executive Office of Public Safety through the Department of State Police and the Department of Fire Services developed the following guide. This Guide is intended to assist schools and communities in assessing the safety of their schools and of their communities, and to develop plans to effectively respond to emergencies and afford the greatest protection to students, staff and the general public.

BACKGROUND

Recent history is marked with incidents of increasing school violence. Where once the nearly exclusive dangers were those of fire and athletic injury, acts of almost unimaginable horror have emerged. A review of some of these incidents indicates that substantial benefit can be realized by engaging in preplanning activities for each school building in a community.

PLANNING GUIDANCE

While standardization of the many aspects of emergency response operations is optimal, differences specific to individual communities require that plans be developed locally by those individuals most familiar with the community and schools. Accordingly, this planning guidance is presented as a series of questions and recommendations.

It is hoped that communities will assemble a planning team consisting of local public safety leaders, school and other public officials to undertake the planning efforts. It is important to note that the planning effort, which brings together those who must manage the emergency, is as important as the plan.

This planning guidance is presented to work outward from the school building. Planners should begin with the internal facility preplans, then work outward to include school grounds, the local community and then the community at large. Through this process, a complete response plan can be developed that will enable prompt and effective coordination.

SCHOOL EMERGENCIES PLANNING GROUP

The development of preplans is a complex undertaking that requires participation by all who will use the plan. It is recommended that a working group be developed in each community that is comprised of representation from each identified local agency. It is recommended that, at a minimum, this working group consist of representatives from the School Administration of each school in the community, School Maintenance management from each school, the police department, fire department, emergency medical services (if other than fire department), local emergency management, and from the Chief Executive Office (Mayor or Selectmen). Once established, it is recommended that this working group be a permanent standing organization to periodically review changes to the school, environment, community, and maintain updates and exercise the plan.

COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE for SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

I. INTERNAL FACILITY PRE-PLANS

Internal facilities refer to all buildings that constitute a school campus. This includes maintenance sheds, administration buildings, athletic facilities, and other structures. Though some buildings are not normally occupied, these buildings may contain important controls or may be adversely used in the commission of an act of violence and should therefore be included.

1. It is recommended that plans and maps are obtained from the local Board or Department of Assessors, and that school blueprints, aerial photographs, and satellite photographs available on the Internet be obtained for use in planning purposes.
2. It is suggested that school architectural drawing, graphic arts or other such school programs be tasked with drawing floor plans and other maps for use in this planning process.
3. Use building floor plans to identify the following locations, structures, and uses:
 - Entrances and exits
 - Stairways, Elevators
 - Windows, indicating if operable and inoperable
 - Fire doors
 - Locking doors, Alarmed doors
 - Motion detector devices
 - Hazard Areas, including:
 - Electrical control rooms and panels
 - Utility access/controls
 - Classrooms/Labs, including chemistry labs
 - Precursor chemicals
 - Interior Maintenance Areas
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Flammable combustible storage
 - Engineering areas
 - Boiler Treatment chemicals
 - Vocational shop areas
 - Compressed gases
 - Liquid fuels
 - Swimming pools
 - Pool Chemicals – Chlorine
 - Grounds Maintenance
 - Pesticides – Organophosphates
 - Kitchens and Food Storage Areas
 - Refrigeration gases – Ammonia
 - Potential for deliberate food contamination
 - Civil Defense Supplies
 - Ether, Morphine
 - Fire control devices including alarm boxes, sprinklers and hand held extinguishers
 - Fire standpipe and sprinkler connections
 - Domestic water controls
 - Roof access, including Skylights, indicating if they are operable and inoperable
 - Basement or crawlspace access
 - Indicate which walls are solid masonry and which are framed drywall

COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE for SCHOOL EMERGENCIES _____

4. Assess and indicate on the maps building systems such as:
 - HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning) for:
 - Location and accessibility of air intakes
 - Filtration media location and accessibility
 - Shutdown procedures
 - Plumbing drainage
 - Fire Sprinkler systems – emergency chemical decontamination use
 - Natural gas – use locations and shutoff
 - Potable water – access to water supply
 - Electrical access/shutoff
 - Cable television access/shutoff
5. Record the location of the building on the map.
 - Latitude/Longitude
 - Directions from the nearest Interstate Highway
6. Provide evacuation routes from classrooms and other general use areas on the map.
 - Primary
 - Two (2) Secondary

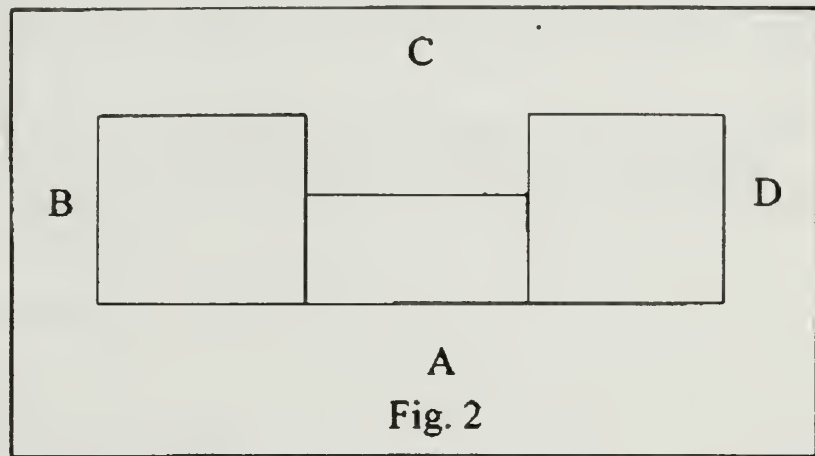
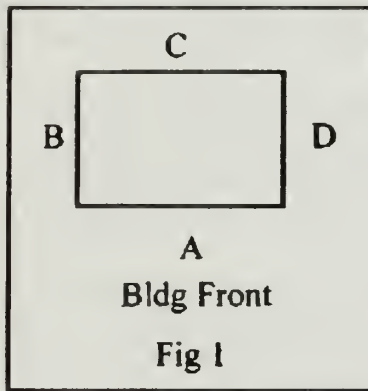
NOTE: Evacuation drills should alter the evacuation routes periodically and on an irregular basis.

COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE for SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

7. Building Identification

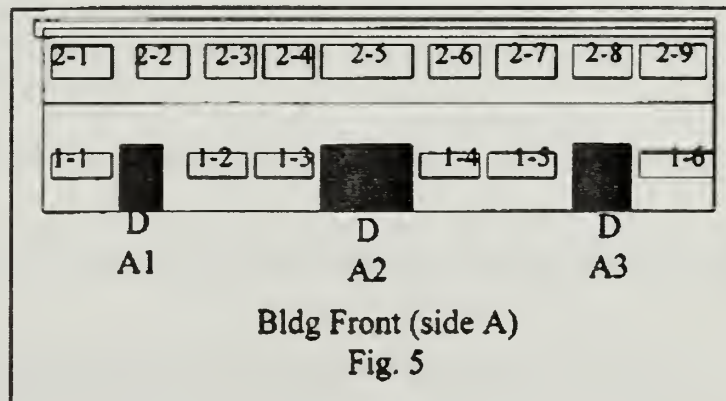
NOTE: In some emergency operations, buildings are identified in such a way as to allow those who are not familiar with the building to be easily directed to a building side, door, or window. It is recommended that these designations be made and written into the plan to allow the immediate ability to direct responding and evacuating persons to the correct location:

The exterior of the building is lettered A, B, C & D, beginning with the front of the building (A) and proceeding in a clockwise direction. A square building would then be lettered "A-D" to encompass all four sides. Alcoves and angles on the same side are not lettered separately. See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 for examples.



Signs designating the building side can be planted in the ground or affixed to walls without being explained as solely for emergency use. If ground signs are used, they should be above the snow line.

Doors and windows on each lettered side are numbered as follows: Side plus floor (if basement windows are visible they are considered floor 1), and sequential from left to right. Windows on the "A" side of the building, first floor, would be designated window A-1-#. Doors would similarly be designated (e.g. Door A-1). Figure 3 illustrates door and window designation.



Unlike building sides, it is probably impractical to physically mark doors and windows with the designation. Notation may, however, be made on building floor plans used for preplanning.



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8. Identify internal locations for Horizontal Evacuation and Assembly

NOTE: Horizontal evacuation is the movement of building occupants from an effected area of a building into an unaffected safe area. This type of movement is commonly used for storm damage when a roof or windows of the building are compromised in one section. It is a viable option when external evacuation is either unsafe or undesirable and a safe area inside the building can be identified.

9. Identify procedure for "Shelter-in-Place."

NOTE: Shelter-in-Place is the process of securing people where they are and preventing external hazards from entering. This type of procedure is often used for hazardous materials incidents when the hazard poses no risk to people who remain inside with doors and windows shut. Shelter-in-place can also be used if a violent act is taking place outside of a building or in an isolated part of the building and is contained.

10. Identify a process for maintaining a written inventory of the types and location of hazardous materials, including items listed in number 1 of this guide. Maintain this list with the school emergency plan. Provide an updated list periodically to public safety. This should include Material Safety Data Sheets that are required to be provided by the manufacturer.

11. Identify chemical product control measures for the facility such as

- Physical Security
- Accountability Procedures
- Frequency of Inventory Check
- Reporting and Investigation of Missing Supplies

12. Establish methods of personnel accountability during an emergency including the immediate availability of:

- Daily class student rosters
- Daily staff/employee roster
- Absentee list employee and student
- Field trip rosters
- Known restraining orders
- Photo identification of students and staff (copies of current and previous year yearbooks may be useful for this purpose)

**NOTE: These rosters should be compiled each day in a form that can be easily taken from the building during an emergency evacuation.*

13. Identify and discuss key decision making responsibilities, such as evacuation, in general and for specific emergencies.

- Utilize Unified Command as the best method to address such issues
- Decision to "lock-down" other facilities
- Suggested that the emergencies identified in the "Pre-planned Critical Incident Procedures" section of this guide be considered for this section.
- Responsibility designation should be made in accordance with existing statutory and regulatory requirements (i.e. Mass Casualty, Hazardous Materials)

14. Identify and assign key roles in plan activation. All staff should have a clear understanding of what they are responsible to do in the event of an emergency. A minimum of three staff persons should be trained to carry out each identified role to account for absenteeism or injury incurred during the emergency. Unassigned staff may be designated to assemble in a personnel pool location for assignment as needed.

Key assignments may include:

- Key decision making responsibilities
- Coordinating evacuation routes
- Managing Communications
- Establishing a facility Command Center
- Liaison to Command Post (public safety)
- Enabling or disabling utilities
- Collecting rosters and verifying accountability
- Serving as an internal medical team
- Hospital liaison (s) (should have photo ID book or yearbooks to identify students)
- Securing hazardous areas from entry
- Employee search (suspicious package) team
- Define duties of faculty with regard to responsibility to stay with students, etc.
- Notification to other schools
- Notification to bus company(s)

II. SCHOOL GROUNDS PREPLANNING

School Grounds refers to the outside property of the school and any property, such as public parking lots or parks, that are routinely used by the school such as for assembly points during fire drills or school athletic events. Planning for School grounds should consider two scenarios: the location of an emergency, and as the primary evacuation route from the school building.

Preplanning for school grounds entails a study of the topography of the grounds to consider the protection school grounds provide during an evacuation, and the protection school grounds provides persons within the school from a perpetrator on the grounds.

IDENTIFY

1. Routes from the building that provide cover while exiting the building. Where do these routes lead? Can they be identified as evacuation routes from a threat inside the school building?
2. Areas, such as athletic fields, that are behind ridges and not in view of or from the building. Can these safely be identified as collection points?
3. Evacuation routes and collection points that will be kept free of snow.
4. Access routes and loading areas for ambulances in the event of multiple casualties. This should be done for several locations around the building and should be done in concert with the planning of fire apparatus access.
5. Casualty collection points. Consider provisions for sheltering these points with deployable tents, etc.
6. Locations for the following functions
 - External command posts
 - Equipment staging areas. Several locations should be identified to avoid placing these operations in a threat area.
 - Contingency locations for busses to load students in the event those normal locations are in use for emergency operations or are in threat areas.
 - Locations for the staging of press and families. These should be well separated from each other.
 - Primary and secondary helicopter landing zones
7. Lawn sprinkler systems, which may be used for emergency chemical decontamination.
8. Locations from which a protected line-of-fire could be achieved and consider elimination.
9. Locations from which unauthorized access can be made to school grounds or buildings and consider methods to secure them from access.
10. Uncontrolled vehicle access to loading docks and unobserved schools entrances and consider methods to restrict access to them.
11. Parking that is close to the building and consider restrictions of access.
12. The need for preplans to clear areas for emergency operations including:
 - Tow trucks
 - Snow plows and sanders
 - Front end loaders
13. Location for a possible installation of windsock (s) or small flags atop school buildings to identify wind direction.

III. LOCAL COMMUNITY PREPLANNING

Preplanning of the community, proximate to school grounds, is intended to identify facilities, access and controls to evacuate students, staff and casualties away from the school when no safe location can be identified within the school building or on school grounds. These plans will also identify supports to emergency operations.

Local Community Preplans must also assess hazards to schools and their populations. Hazards include businesses that, by their nature, contain intrinsic hazards and buildings from which acts upon a school or its population may be perpetrated. Local facilities or locations may pose a hazard to persons entering the school, such as arriving or departing busses, as well as those posed during school hours.

In conducting an assessment of the local communities the following should be considered:

1. Identify what buildings or facilities directly abut school property.
2. Determine if there are any hazardous materials stored or used in these buildings.
3. Identify buildings with unrestricted access that provide a "line-of-fire" to the school building or grounds.
4. Establishment of procedures to notify external, effected, facilities
 - Other schools (to hold classes, lock-down the facility, delay dismissal, etc.)
 - Nearby businesses (regarding line-of-fire, downwind hazard, traffic restriction, evacuation, emergency access/use of facility, etc.)
 - State highways and mass transit (Need to shut down, detour, etc.)
 - Nearby residences.
5. Identify any Local Emergency Planning Committee activities such as:
 - Railroads
 - Fixed Facilities
 - Highways
6. Identify buildings to which a protected evacuation can be made.
7. Identify buildings that can be designated for the following uses during an emergency:
 - Assembly points
 - Command Post
 - Casualty Clearing points
 - Parent Assembly
 - Media Center
 - Equipment staging (parking lots)
8. Identify the vehicle access/egress routes available to and from the school.
9. Identify primary and secondary helicopter landing zones

IV. COMMUNITY PREPLANNING

Community Preplanning involves a review of overall community preparedness. Communities have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) for emergencies such as natural and man made disasters. As part of the preplanning effort, these plans should be reviewed and updated to reflect current resources and community hazards. Key resources and procedures relevant to school emergencies from the CEMP should be referenced and/or copied into the school emergency preplan.

Plans should include specific procedures for special responses including:

Regional Hazardous Materials Teams

- System description
- Locations
- Team capabilities
- Request mechanism – through local fire department, State Fire Marshal
- Operating mode – functional group under fire department

Bomb Squad

- System description
- Locations
- Team capabilities
- Request mechanism – through local police department, State Police, State Fire Marshal
- Operating mode – functional group under police department

Police Tactical Response Teams

- System description
- Locations
- Team capabilities
- Request mechanism – through local police department, State Police
- Operating mode – functional group under police department

Multiple Casualty Incident Response Procedures

- System description
- Locations of EMS units
- Response capabilities
- Request mechanism – through local police department, fire department, EMS
- Operating mode – functional group under Operations Section of Incident Command System

V. PREPLANNED CRITICAL INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Specific threats require special planning. Preplans should include procedures to address specific threats as identified by the planning committee. Examples of such threats include:

1. Aircraft Crashes
2. Threat packages
 - Chemical
 - Biological
 - Radiological
3. Hostage situation
4. Barricaded suspect
5. Sniper
6. Explosive device
7. Chemical Incident – Mass Decontamination Procedures
8. Natural Disaster – Mass Casualty

** NOTE: Assistance in identifying incident-specific concerns can be obtained from the "Guidelines for Critical Incident Stabilization" published by the Executive Office of Public Safety.*

VI. PLAN ACCESS, MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY

Experience in developing emergency plans has shown that the planning process is as important as the plan. Ongoing discussion and review of procedures and threats by all of the parties responsible for the safety of the public always results in better preparation. Plans should be updated as risks, facilities, capabilities and personnel change.

Procedures should be integrated into the preplan that provide a mechanism to make changes. Plans should be reviewed annually before school opens; exercises are highly recommended.

Each agency and facility that bears responsibility defined in the plan should keep a copy of the preplan. Copies of the plan must also be kept on-board some combination of emergency vehicles that will respond to an emergency at the school. During an actual emergency, the school copy of the plan may not be accessible.

It is recommended that a copy be assigned to the first dispatched fire apparatus to each school. If police vehicles are assigned to a district, such that the response of a particular vehicle is assured, that vehicle should have a copy. In larger communities, with multiple police vehicles, this may be impractical. Command vehicles for police and fire should have copies for all schools if practical.

It is also suggested that the use of a lock box attached to the school building be examined. Lock boxes are currently used in industry to store fire and hazardous materials pre-plans. Two types of boxes are currently used in Massachusetts; the "Supersafe" and "Knoxbox" (brand names). Information on these devices can be obtained through your fire department or through the state Department of Fire Services.

Security

Because preplans can also serve as a "how to" for potential perpetrators of violent acts, the security of emergency preplans is important. While it is vital to have preplans immediately available to school and public safety agencies, it is important to keep them from general distribution.

A record of each plan produced should be kept centrally, identify the agency in possess and the plan version and number. Plans should not be broadly distributed to teachers and staff, and should not be kept in the classroom. Pertinent instruction may be reproduced and issued to staff, but should not contain information such as is contained in the internal and external hazard identification section.

COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE for SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

VII. TESTING THE PLAN

When written plans have been completed, it is important to employ some method of testing the plan before training and drilling on it commence. The following standard test is recommended for use by planning groups as a method of evaluating the emergency response plan prior to implementation. The test is presented as a series of objectives with corresponding activities. Plans should may evaluated using this test both during development and upon completion

OBJECTIVE: Initial notification of response agencies and response personnel

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to notify appropriate agencies and to mobilize emergency personnel

OBJECTIVE: Direction and Control

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to identify, coordinate and control emergency response through the operations phase.

OBJECTIVE: Incident Assessment

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to identify the hazards/problems associated with the incident and to assess contingent activities involved in both emergency and post emergency response.

OBJECTIVE: Resource Management

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to mobilize and manage resources required for emergency response.

OBJECTIVE: Facilities, equipment and displays

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the adequacy of facilities, equipment, displays and other materials to support the emergency operation.

OBJECTIVE: Alert and notification

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to signal an alert and to provide emergency notification containing information and instructions to students, faculty and administrators.

OBJECTIVE: Protective Action

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the capability to decide upon and direct the implementation of protective actions for students, faculty, and administrators.

OBJECTIVE: Media

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to coordinate the development and dissemination of clear, accurate and timely information to the media.

OBJECTIVE: Response Personnel Safety

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to protect emergency responder health and safety.

OBJECTIVE: Traffic Access Control

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the organizational ability and resources necessary to implement site security (perimeter) and to control evacuation traffic flow and access to designated areas.

COMMUNITY PRE-PLANNING GUIDE for SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

OBJECTIVE: Crime Scene Management

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to control the crime scene pending the arrival of law enforcement professionals.

OBJECTIVE: Emergency Medical Services

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the adequacy of personnel, procedures, equipment and vehicles for transporting sick and injured persons.

OBJECTIVE: Incident Documentation

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the ability to document an incident and response.

